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SUBJECT: PRT KUNDUZ - KUNDUZ CITY'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Since 2001, a number of informal settlements have sprung up around the Kunduz City's old urban core. Made up of returnees, internally displaced persons (IDP) and people simply attracted to the opportunities in the big city, these settlements vary in the level of amenities and organization. The city government faces the challenge of incorporating these settlements into its overall planning process. USAID's Land Titling and Economic Restructuring Activity (LTERA) project, in cooperation with municipal authorities, is providing the first step to integrating these settlements into the broader community. However, the city government appears more focused on developing its high profile "New City" than on addressing the informal settlements. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Property and land ownership rules in Kunduz Province have been enforced in the past by a mixture of informal village dispute mechanisms, local strong-man appropriation and, occasionally, government regulation. Kuchi migrants, for example, have used traditional wintering sites for generations. During the Mujahadeen period, five competing commanders carved Kunduz City into spheres of influence, raising money by appropriating and selling off the properties of families who had fled abroad. The Taliban era brought more stability as appropriations ceased and some families returned to reclaim their inheritance. After 2001, many people returned to Kunduz from exile abroad or migrated from more remote areas of the Northeast to the traditional regional capital, reportedly doubling the size of the city. As people fill the city, two competing visions of urban growth have emerged.

Local Officials See the Future in Kunduz "New City"

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13. (SBU) The official city government's plan promotes the "New City," located on a plateau to the south of Kunduz's city center and near the airport, the PRT and other coalition facilities. Despite the lack of water, energy, paved roads and other utilities, the government has already sold or otherwise allocated plots to favored homesteaders, government ministries and businesses. Sites for parks, bazaars and other amenities are also laid out. While there are few completed residences in the "New City," a variety of ministries are already operating out of newly built offices. While a 3.9 million euro German government-sponsored potable water project supplying deep wells, pumping equipment, distribution network and water storage currently targets Kunduz's traditional old city, water needs in the "New City" will continue to be met by individual wells for the foreseeable future. Arguing that the PRT and airport need multiple paved roads to access the city, Kunduz City Mayor Wahed Aziz and Governor Omar have strongly lobbied western development agencies to finance a road through the "New City" to the airport and PRT. To demonstrate their commitment, the city government has already taken the initiative to begin paving the road leading from the old city to the plateau. Local officials also place priority on providing the site with energy and potable water.

¶4. (SBU) To the east of the plateau lie two of Kunduz's five new informal settlements, Feyzabad and Rustaqabad. Together, the satellite towns contain about 3000 plots for an estimated 35,000 people. The points of origin of the settlers are reflected in the names of the settlements, with Feyzabad populated by ethnic Tajiks from Badakhshan Province and Rustaqabad settled by a mix of Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek settlers from Takhar Province. Though lacking paved roads, electricity or centralized water supply, Feyzabad and Rustaqabad were clearly well thought out by the initial settlers and community leaders. The towns feature well-laid, unpaved roads, shops, open park areas and plots set aside for future schools and meeting houses. Other satellite towns around Kunduz, such as Kalamani and Saki Bori, were more ad hoc in their growth and may prove more difficult for city government to manage and service in the future.

¶5. (SBU) USAID's LTERA program, in cooperation with the Kunduz City Government, is taking the first steps in "regularizing" Feyzabad and Rustaqabad by mapping the plots and surveying families. The city government can then issue certificates of pre-ownership that will eventually be recognized by the courts. In parallel, the LTERA project is working with the courts to organize and digitize Kunduz's land deed records. It is expected that families will ultimately pay local government around \$1 per square meter for the legalized allotments, most of which are around 400 square meters. Throughout the summer, the LTERA team met with community leaders to explain the project and get local buy in. LTERA reports that community expectations are high that with tenuring will come city utilities and services, such as potable water. In the shuras, local elders

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also expressed their primary hope that the tenuring process will result in greater security and protection by the local government.

#### No Comprehensive Plan to Absorb Kunduz Growing Numbers

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¶6. (SBU) Noting the population of Kunduz has nearly doubled in the past decade, Mayor Aziz admits the municipality has few resources and no "comprehensive plan" to effectively manage the increasing number of returnees and IDPs. Without such a plan, he says, it will be impossible to absorb more returnees. He therefore sees the utility of the LTERA mapping and survey project, noting that with tenuring comes increased tax revenue for the city. Aziz would also like to see the archive project extended to include the city's 5000 property records in order to unify the information in both court and municipal documents. He believes this will create transparency. When LTERA's Feyzabad and Rustaqabad projects are completed next year, some of the project's equipment will be turned over to the city government so that its newly trained staff may continue in Kunduz's other satellite towns, further increasing municipal capacity.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: With its relative stability, rich agriculture and crossroads location, Kunduz City will likely continue attracting settlers in the years ahead, further straining the city's ability to absorb the added population. By providing land security, the LTERA program goes a long way to bringing these communities formally into the municipality, which - in turn - promotes economic growth. Future development projects focusing on the settlements' further integration into the municipality would also increase such capacity. However, with the mayor and local authorities focused on the sparsely populated, though presumably lucrative, "New City," the informal settlements and their swelling populations will continue to be an afterthought and their needs neglected.

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